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The tenth paper appeared early in 1916 and in it the author made certain recommendations with regard to the functions of the proposed Tariff Commission which was later established, with Professor Taussig as chairman.

Through the entire collection of writings the author holds to the basic free trade argument that tariff protection diverts the productive energies of the nation from industries which are self-supporting without subsidy to industries which need nursing at the expense of the consumer.

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The Enclosures in England: An Economic Reconstruction. By HARRIET BRADLEY, PH.D. Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law, Columbia University. Vol. LXXV, No. 2. New York, 1918.

Some twenty years ago Professor Gay laid the foundations for a scientific study of the enclosure movement in England and since that time it has perhaps received more serious consideration from students of English economic history than has any other single subject. The importance of the enclosure movement amply justifies the attention which it has attracted, for it not only produced a striking change in the English method of land holding and land working but it also involved a degradation of the economic and social status of the English agricultural classes, the effect of which is all too apparent in the English countryside today.

Different aspects of the movement have appealed to different students. Some have concerned themselves with the origins, others with the methods by which it was accomplished, others with the effects upon the produce of the soil, still others with its social consequences. And judgments vary accordingly. You will get a very different opinion about it from a "spirited cultivator" like Mr. Prothero from the one you will get from an ardent social worker like Mr. Tawney. It was so even in the sixteenth century when Tusser, with an eye to the crops, sang its praises in bad verse, while Hales, regarding the dispossessed peasantry, denounced it in excellent prose. Relatively little has been written about the causes, for the very good reason that causes are hard things to locate with certainty. Dr. Gray, in his admirable study of English field systems, has made it clear enough that the open-field system

yielded early to enclosure in those parts of England where conditions of land tenure or methods of land working facilitated the change, as they did in the southeast and the southwest. It was slowest in coming in midland England where the Anglo-Saxon three-field system prevailed. But by the middle of the fifteenth century it was well under way even there, and it seems to have proceeded without interruption in that region for the next three centuries. It is with the causes of this inclosure movement in the midlands that Miss Bradley is chiefly concerned. She ignores the earlier movement in the southeast and southwest altogether, and she has little to say about the movement in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Her work is based entirely upon materials in print and mainly upon secondary accounts. The painstaking care with which scholars like Gay and Gray and Slater and Tawney worked through tedious manor rolls and manor surveys was not for her. Perhaps if it had been, she would have been a trifle less cocksure in her conclusions, and a little more respectful of the difficulties in the way of any sweeping generalizations.

Her position, briefly stated, is that enclosure was due to the fact that the older methods of land working had exhausted the soil. It is not likely that anyone will quarrel with her about that. No one will deny, and so far as I know nobody has denied, that soil exhaustion had a good deal to do with the conversion of open arable land into inclosed pasture land in the sixteenth century. But to assume, as Miss Bradley seems to assume, that soil exhaustion was the only factor in producing the change is to assume too much. She may be right in her contention that the increase in the price of wool relative to the price of corn, which has sometimes been urged as the incentive for sixteenth-century inclosures, did not occur, though she places altogether too much dependence upon Thorold Rogers' meager and scattered statistics. But she loses sight of the fact that it was not so much the price of wool as the net profits obtainable from woolgrowing that made it attractive. This was a matter not altogether dependent upon soil barrenness or soil fertility. A cultivator even of virgin soil might have found woolgrowing more profitable than agriculture because wool was much easier to store, much easier to transport, and probably much easier to market than corn. It is important to remember in this connection that the wool trade was the best organized trade in fifteenth-century England. From the point of view also of farm management there was much to be said for woolgrowing on a large scale, as opposed to small-scale tenant farming with

its reluctant workers and its miserable customary rents. Considerations like these Miss Bradley ignores altogether, yet to the new type of landlord who was finding his way from the cities into the country at the beginning of the sixteenth century they must have carried a great deal of weight, leaving out of account the added incentive of soil exhaustion. The fact is that even if we decide that the enclosure movement was in its essence a movement to adapt the soil to the uses for which it was best suited, we still must allow that the chemical elements which determine the best usefulness of the soil are intricately compounded with social elements which cannot be resolved by the reagents of the soil analyst.

Now and then Miss Bradley speaks as though she were the first to point out the bearing of soil exhaustion upon the conversion of arable to pasture land. As a matter of fact, of course, the idea is a perfectly familiar one and Miss Bradley's position is only remarkable because of the excessive emphasis which she lays upon it. Indeed, she is so taken by the importance of soil exhaustion that she even undertakes to apply it to the solution of that difficult problem in the agrarian history of fourteenth-century England, the commutation of villein services. In this connection she points out that in the commutation of services for money rents the tenant got the better end of the bargain. That may perhaps be accepted. It has generally been explained by the fact that the tenant was in a position to dictate the terms. Miss Bradley maintains that it was because the barrenness of the soil was such that he could no longer pay as much as formerly. According to her analysis it was his increased poverty rather than his increased prosperity which secured for him a reduction of rents. And she is brave enough to challenge the position of the great Vinogradoff himself upon the point. She had need to be well furnished for a passage of arms with him. But her armor is thin. She proves what needed no further proof, that tenants were giving up their holdings and were even running away from them in the fourteenth century. She proves also that they themselves sometimes attributed this to their inability to meet their rents, and that the landlords often advanced motives of charity for rent reductions. But she ought not to have forgotten that poverty has been the commonest excuse in history for not doing distasteful things and that motives of charity were currently used in the Middle Ages to justify every deed that was dark and every trick that was queer. Miss Bradley must find better support for her position than these threadbare formulas before she can induce serious students to abandon the old standards.

Nevertheless, although it appears that she has pressed her point too far, it must be conceded that not enough attention has hitherto been paid to the importance of soil exhaustion as a factor in agrarian changes in England. Miss Bradley has rendered a service in calling attention to it.

CONYERS READ

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